

# Willingness to Defend Lithuania: “System Problem Detected, Action Pending”

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After joining NATO, Lithuania mobilized all its military capabilities to become a responsible partner of the Alliance, primarily by participating in expeditionary missions. The annexation of Crimea inspired the return of Lithuania's security and defence policy to territorial defence. Conventional capacity building and tactics to combat hybrid threats have become key challenges for the national defence system. The first task was to find ways to increase Lithuania's quantitative advantage over a potential aggressor, i.e., to strengthen deterrence by denial. Compulsory permanent initial military service was used to create an army reserve. In this context, the question arose as to whether the duty to the homeland should be performed out of love for it or simply because it is mandated. In fact, one of the direct expressions of love for the homeland may be willingness to defend one's own country.

According to a 2019 representative public survey<sup>1</sup>, only 4.2 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that in the case of an armed attack Lithuania's inhabitants should defend themselves and the state. In 2020, the number of respondents with this attitude rose to 8.4 percent. Even before the Covid-2019 pandemic, the reluctance of Lithuania's inhabitants to express willingness to defend the state was the strongest of all the Baltic states, comparing the survey data of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia in 2019 and 2020. Unlike in the case of Estonia,<sup>2</sup> annual representative surveys using the same questionnaire to assess the willingness to defend one's own country are not conducted in Lithuania. Consequently, it becomes difficult to draw general conclusions about the dynamics of the willingness to defend Lithuania. The most important problem encountered in analysing the results

of different surveys is not only that the wording of the question differs, but also that the surveys do not reveal the motives of those who do not want to contribute to Lithuania's defence. The first part of the chapter is intended to discuss how willingness to defend one's own state is measured in Lithuania. In the second part, the will to defend one's state using a weapon is linked to the readiness to do so. It is assumed that in the case of armed resistance, the will alone is not enough, and skills are necessary to strengthen the will. The third part aims to briefly discuss the possible reasons why Lithuanians may lack the will to defend their state. What is not discussed in this chapter is no less important. How does belief in the capabilities of the military affect the will of the people to resist and the will to defend the state? How do public discourses about "small Lithuania" and "big hostile Russia" affect people's belief that defending the country is not a case lost before it even began due to the asymmetry in military capabilities? And, most importantly, what will predict how the willingness to defend one's state could become a real action? Since respondents are asked a hypothetical question whether they would defend the state, they provide a hypothetical answer.

## **Who is willing to defend Lithuania?**

In fact, the willingness of Lithuanians to defend their homeland is not a frequent object of sociological surveys. The Civil Society Institute "Civitas" (CSI) has been conducting a survey of the Civic empowerment index in Lithuania since 2007. After the annexation of Crimea, in 2014 and 2015 the institute included a question in its annual surveys: "Of course, we all hope that there will be no more war, but if it would, would you defend your country?" To measure a change of the willingness to defend one's country, the institute included data from the European Social Survey (ESS) (Table 1). According to the Civic power index of 2014 and 2015, the willingness to defend one's country is related to one's active participation in civil and political activities, inclination to contribute to solutions of various social problems, and belief that citizens have influence in society.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, we all hope that there will be no more war, but if it would, would you defend your country?	1990 (ESS)	1999 (ESS)	2005 (ESS)	2014 (CSI)	2015 (CSI)
Yes	61	46	32	56,7	56
No	12	18	41	14,5	17
Don't know	27	37	27	28,9	27

**Table 1.** Willingness to defend Lithuania according to polls included in the Civic empowerment index by the Civil Society Institute (Lithuania) (percent).<sup>4</sup>

In 2017, the results of the research project “Subjective Security in a Changing Geopolitical Context: Peculiarities, Forming Factors, and Strategies Developed by Individuals” were published. According to the survey included in the project, in 2016, only 49 percent of respondents were willing to defend Lithuania, while 34 percent of the respondents were not. The study showed that young men with military experience were more willing to defend their homeland. The authors of the study also made the assumption that pride in one’s state and patriotic attitudes may influence the will to defend Lithuania in the event of military aggression. The survey showed that 39 percent of the respondents were proud to be citizens of Lithuania and would go to defend their homeland in the event of war; 20 percent of the respondents were not proud to be Lithuanians, but willing to defend their homeland, while 17 percent were proud, but not willing to defend one’s country due to their age, health status or other reasons. It is also necessary to mention that the results of the study indicate that patriotism is linked to specific actions in the event of war, i.e., less patriotic individuals in the case of war indicated a desire to emigrate, while patriotic-minded individuals stated that they would seek to actively contribute to the country’s defence.<sup>5</sup>

In 2018 and 2020, a Sociological Survey of Media Preferences, Geopolitical Situation Assessment and Attitudes towards Threats was commissioned by the Ministry of National Defence and the Eastern Europe Studies Centre (EESC). The survey was based on the same assumption – pride in one’s state and patriotic attitudes may influence the willingness to defend one’s state. However, the report on the conducted survey includes just one illustrated

example, that the respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement: “Unable to resist with weapon, I would contribute to the defence of the country in other way” (Table 2). For some reason the willingness of the respondents to contribute to the defence of homeland with a weapon was mentioned as if by the way without providing clear data with figures: “32% of the respondents said they would contribute to the country’s defence with a weapon if needed: compared to 2018, the change in these numbers were not statistically significant”<sup>6</sup>. Meanwhile, in 2018, only 24 percent of the respondents were inclined to contribute to armed resistance in case of war.<sup>7</sup> Whether the population’s higher level of willingness to engage in peaceful civic resistance is related to personal attitudes or simply to a lack of knowledge on how to use a weapon remains open.

Year	Statement	Totally agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Dis-agree	Totally dis-agree	No opinion
2018	Proud to be citizens of Lithuania	22	36	21	13	6	3
	Unable to resist with a weapon, would resist in another way	18	30	19	13	14	6
2020	Proud to be citizens of Lithuania	24	38	20	15	2	1
	Unable to resist with a weapon, would resist in another way	21	37	17	8	14	3

**Table 2.** Comparison of being proud in Lithuanian citizenship and willingness to participate in civic resistance in 2018 and 2020 (surveys ordered by the ministry of National Defence and the Eastern Europe Studies Centre (Lithuania)) (percent).<sup>8</sup>

The most comprehensive study of the willingness to defend the homeland titled “Who would go to defend Lithuania? Assumptions and possibilities of civic resistance” was published in 2018. According to the results of a public survey conducted in 2017, 42.2 percent answered positively to the question “Of course, we all hope that there will be no more war, but if it arises, would you personally contribute to Lithuania’s defence?” 25.2 percent of the respondents did not express the will to defend the homeland, and 29.9 said they did not know. 3 percent of the respondents indicated that they would take the initiative to organize the resistance and 36 percent of the respondents would contribute to it, although as many as 32 percent would not contribute, and 29 percent did not know how they would behave in the case of armed attack.<sup>9</sup> A lack of knowledge and skills can lead people to declare they do not know whether they will defend their homeland in the event of war. One thing is to have a particular set of skills and decide not to use it, another thing is to actually have no clue what to do in case of military attack.

Since 2018, the Ministry of National Defence of Lithuania commissions public surveys to assess public trust in the army and willingness to defend the homeland.<sup>10</sup> The results of the survey are included in the Annual Activity Reports of the Ministry. According to the surveys, in 2018, 47 percent of the respondents were willing to defend one’s homeland, while 34 percent were unwilling, and 19 percent were undecided. The number of the willing to defend Lithuania is slowly increasing (48.5 percent in 2019 and 49 percent in 2020).<sup>11</sup> The goal in 2021 is to reach 52 percent of the citizens willing to defend the homeland. As in 2018, the Minister of National Defence Raimundas Karoblis stated: “A strong army is unimaginable without public support. Growing public support for the Armed Forces and determination to protect the Homeland if it is threatened is directly related to the ongoing modernization of the Armed Forces and the growing public awareness of emerging threats and the information impact of hostile forces.”<sup>12</sup> The Annual Reports include just a percentage share of Lithuania’s citizens willing to defend the country, whereas data on unwilling or ignorant citizens are not provided. Thus, there is no possibility to determine whether the number of those who are not willing to defend their state is decreasing or increasing. It also remains unclear what proportion of the population would contribute to peaceful resistance and how many would be willing and able to contribute to armed resistance.

## Who is ready to defend Lithuania?

Article 139 of Lithuania's constitution defines that "The defence of the State of Lithuania against a foreign armed attack shall be the right and duty of each citizen of the Republic of Lithuania. The citizens of the Republic of Lithuania must perform military or alternative national defence service according to the procedure established by law."<sup>13</sup> The duty to defend was defined by two basic forms: an initial period of mandatory military service (12 months duration) and alternative national defence service. Alternative types of service included Leadership courses, basic military training programme, studies at the Military Academy of Lithuania, and volunteer service in the national defence volunteer forces.<sup>14</sup>

In 2008, the Lithuanian government decided to change the mixed army recruitment model to a professional army, even though conscripts made up about 75 percent of the battalions' contingent at that time. Accordingly, the abolition of compulsory initial military service had far-reaching negative consequences, i.e., when Russia annexed Crimea, the full staffing of different units in Lithuania ranged from 18 to 72 percent.<sup>15</sup> Thus, in 2015, it was decided to return the conscription duty (nine months of mandatory service) as a matter of urgency. The decision had two main objectives: to fill army units and to prepare a reserve.<sup>16</sup> At first, the conscription age was 19–26 years, however, in 2019, the draftees age group was changed to 18–23 years.

When the Lithuanian Parliament urgently decided in 2015 to return to the conscript model, which was abandoned in 2008, the slogan began to spread among young people: "Everyone has the right to not kill."<sup>17</sup> This illustrates that a country's defence may have two connotations. The first is that people are not willing to contribute to the defence of the country because they want to stay alive (desire to survive). The second is that they don't want to defend the state because they don't want to take the life of another.

A photo project "They Won the Lottery" was soon presented to the public. Fourteen portraits of crying men and their insights into masculinity and conscript army<sup>18</sup> in Lithuania received condemnation in the public space for the reluctance of young men to perform their duties to the homeland. Some influential people called the photo project an "insightful, ideological, intellectual, attractive and extremely beautiful betrayal of the state."<sup>19</sup> In

response to the project, members of the Estonian National Defence League, a voluntary national defence organization, presented a photo project “Without Tears”, which sought to demonstrate that people living in the small Baltic states need to protect their “beloved freedom”<sup>20</sup>. Nevertheless, according to the public opinion poll, 68 percent of the respondents supported the return of the conscript army, and only 26 percent of the respondents opposed the decision.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, in 2016, 81 percent of the respondents believed that mandatory military service is beneficial for young people, 12 percent of the respondents indicated the opposite.<sup>22</sup>

In 2015, 36825 draftees were selected by a random electronic selection system, i.e., won the lottery. Of these, 3000 were scheduled to be called up for service that year (Table 3). Draftees could choose:

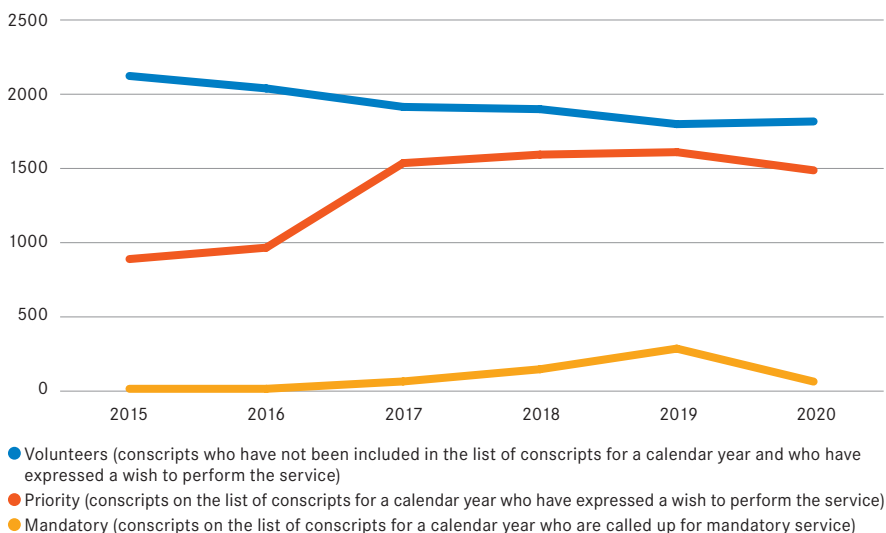
1. to perform the service voluntarily, although they were not included in the lists of conscripts of that year (conscripts volunteers);
2. to perform the service without requesting a postponement of the service time (conscripts in order of priority).

Category	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Planned number of conscripts	3000	3000	3537	3827	3827	3828
Voluntary requests (have not been included in the list of conscripts for a calendar year and who have expressed a wish to perform the service)	2859	3085	2914	2963	2749	2725
Share of all requests for compulsory military service received that year	71%	63%	50%	42%	40%	39%
Priority requests (draftees on the list of conscripts for a calendar year who have expressed a wish to perform the service)	1170	1789	2865	4113	4084	4245
Share of all requests for compulsory military service received that year	29%	37%	50%	58%	60%	61%

**Table 3.** Assessment of conscripts’ request to serve in the Lithuanian Armed Forces in 2015–2020.<sup>23</sup>

3010 soldiers started permanent mandatory initial military service for nine months, of which 2133 young people were volunteers and 877 were conscripts who expressed a desire to serve in order of priority.<sup>24</sup>

According to statistical data provided by the National Military Conscription and Recruitment Service, the nature of requests for compulsory military service began to change (Figure 1). The share of the draftees that were on the list of conscripts for the calendar year and expressed their will to be conscripted on the priority basis has increased from 29 percent in 2015 up to 61 percent in 2020. This indicates that in many cases young people are not unwilling to perform compulsory service, but rather they want to anticipate and plan it.



**Figure 1.** Dynamics of conscripts serving in the Lithuanian Armed Forces in 2015–2020.<sup>25</sup>

Motivation for compulsory military service is supported by paying allowances to soldiers. Not only each soldier is being paid 148 Eur monthly to cover household expenses, but also soldiers are getting cumulative payment after the service period based upon the military service performance level (Table 4). The payment for a volunteer soldier is increased by 30 percent and for a soldier who has been called up for service and expressed a desire to be conscripted on the priority basis by 15 percent.



Evaluation of service performance	Compulsorily called	On priority basis	Volunteer
Excellent	160	184	208
Good	120	138	156
Satisfactory	80	92	104

**Table 4.** Allowances paid (EUR) to soldiers based on their service performance level.<sup>26</sup>

The conscription allowance system was designed not only to increase young people's motivation to perform mandatory military service, but also to compensate for possible financial losses they experience when they leave the labour market. However, the continuing desire to perform the military service on voluntary or on priority basis cannot be explained by financial incentives alone.

In fact, it is necessary to mention that the analysis of young people's motivation to perform permanent compulsory primary military service in 2016 and 2017 shows that up to 63 percent of those who wanted to perform the service stated that they would serve even without reward. Based on the results of the study, it can be argued that the main reason for wanting to serve is to learn to protect one's family and homeland. Also, two important stimuli can be identified: the real potential of the threat of attack and previous experience in military organizations. Thus, at the beginning of service, 81 percent of conscripts were willing to defend the homeland in the case of armed attack, while at the end of service the number of those willing to defend Lithuania with a weapon decreased to 71 percent.<sup>27</sup> Such annual conscript surveys should help to identify the reasons for the decline in the will to defend one's country.

Volunteers form a significant part of the Lithuanian Armed Forces (Table 5). Although serving in the National Defence Volunteer Forces (NDVF) is an alternative form to mandatory military service, the decision of most volunteers is based on patriotic or lifestyle motives.

Category	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Professionals	8146	8660	9400	10173	10729	11168	11428
Conscripts	3010	3000	3507	3638	3697	3352	3800*
National Defence Volunteer Forces	4578	4635	4903	5041	5140	5290	5188
Cadets in the Military Academy of Lithuania	211	211	209	210	217	263	295
Total	15945	16506	18019	19062	19783	20073	20711

**Table 5.** Lithuania's national defence system's personnel size (2015–2021).<sup>28</sup>

\* Planned.

According to the complex sociological research study “Motivation to Serve in the Lithuanian army”, published in 2015, 81 percent of the volunteer soldiers stated that they joined the NDVF because they wanted to defend their homeland in the case of a threat and were driven by patriotic feelings. Additionally, 94 percent of the soldiers stated they wanted to experience adventure and challenges, while 72 percent indicated that they wanted to spend their free time in a worthwhile way. However, only 64 percent of the volunteers were certain that they would go to war to defend Lithuania and 28 percent indicated that they would probably go to war, while 8 percent were undecided or stated that they would not defend their own country. The latter were younger and had less experience, so some of them were simply not convinced they had enough training and skills.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine whether the reasons for serving in the NDVF have changed during the last six years, as continuous sociological research on this topic is not being conducted.

Other factual evidence of increasing citizens' willingness to participate in national defence is the activities of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union. According to the Law of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, the Union is a voluntary, self-governing civil society organization that strengthens the

state's defence capabilities and develops defence educational activities. Although the Union's main objective is to prepare for non-violent civil resistance and armed national defence, it also promotes trust in national institutions and public spirit. In case of war the Riflemen's combat units shall carry out the defence tasks assigned by the command of Lithuania's armed forces.<sup>30</sup> Before the Russia–Ukraine war, the Union united about 7,000 members, and since 2015, the number of members has exceeded 10,000 (Table 6).

Category	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Riflemen	3834	4443	4514	4645	5277	5116
Young Riflemen (age 11–18)	5426	6314	5910	5880	5910	5021
Total	9260	10757	10424	10525	11187	10137

**Table 6.** Dynamics of change of members of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union in 2015–2020 according to the Union's annual reports.<sup>31</sup>

The union experienced its hour of glory in 2014, when the country's political leaders began to recognize the importance of the Riflemen in increasing the state's defence capabilities.<sup>32</sup> In the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, in 2014 alone, more than 800 volunteers joined the union, including many famous and popular people. The call to “become a rifleman to defend the homeland” was effective. It must be borne in mind that this effect may have been temporary, i.e., caused by a sense of threat and mobilization of patriotism due to the annexation of Crimea. For the effect to be lasting, it is necessary to identify the reasons for one's unwillingness to participate in the defence of the state.

## Why wouldn't someone defend Lithuania?

If we were to evaluate the results of the different national public opinion polls discussed in this chapter, we would have to admit that, in the event of war, Lithuanian citizens would be the least willing of all the Baltic states to defend their country. Moreover, as the questions in these surveys differ,

with some placing more emphasis on armed defence and others simply on defence, it is difficult to say that respondents would defend Lithuania using weapons rather than by resisting peacefully.

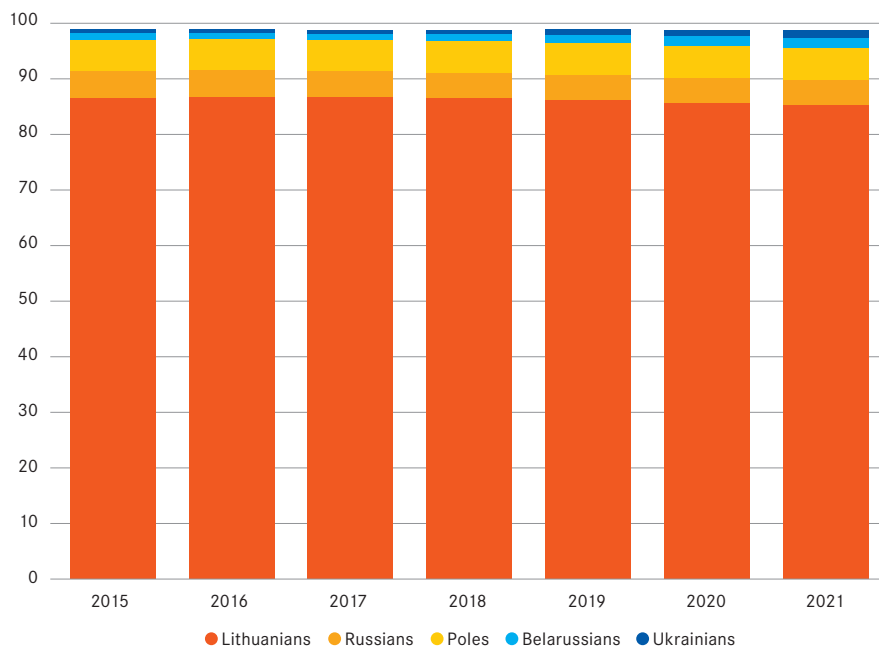
The theoretical framework of willingness to defend one's country is based on a couple of assumptions.<sup>33</sup> In the case of Lithuania, compulsory military service did not have a decisive effect, as the vast majority of conscripts choose to perform their service voluntarily or in order of priority. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, most of the society supports compulsory military service and even sees it as beneficial to young people.

In 2018, parliamentary parties signed an agreement on Lithuanian defence policy guidelines. Decisions on the possibility of introducing universal military service was scheduled for 2022.<sup>34</sup> It is not known when the final decision on the universal military service will be made, but the Minister of National Defence Arvydas Anušauskas confirmed that, due to the poor demographic situation, the universal military service will be inevitable.<sup>35</sup> How this can change the general tendency of willingness to defend the state, so far can only be speculated.

Previously discussed studies suggested that those proud of their citizenship are more likely to participate in civic resistance.<sup>36</sup> According to surveys, in 2020, 62 percent of respondents were proud to be Lithuanian, but only 49 percent said they were willing to defend Lithuania. Lack of pride in Lithuanian citizenship, lost sense of duty to defend one's state and low trust in political institutions were also mentioned in the 2018 monograph "Who would go to defend Lithuania? Civic resistance assumptions and possibilities"<sup>37</sup>. Although comparing the data of different surveys, from 2018 to 2020, the share of the population being proud citizens of Lithuania increased by 4 percent, unfortunately the share of those willing to defend the state increased just by 2 percent. One might argue that survey data is not reflecting reality, because people of other nationalities also are citizens of Lithuania and maybe their national identity is stronger than feeling of political association with the political entity.

In fact, ethnic Lithuanians are the dominant majority in Lithuania and make up more than 85 percent of the population (Figure 2). At the same time, the largest ethnic community consists of Poles (almost 6 percent of the population) and Russians (less than 5 percent of the population). Analysis of data from a representative public survey<sup>38</sup> shows that the proportion of

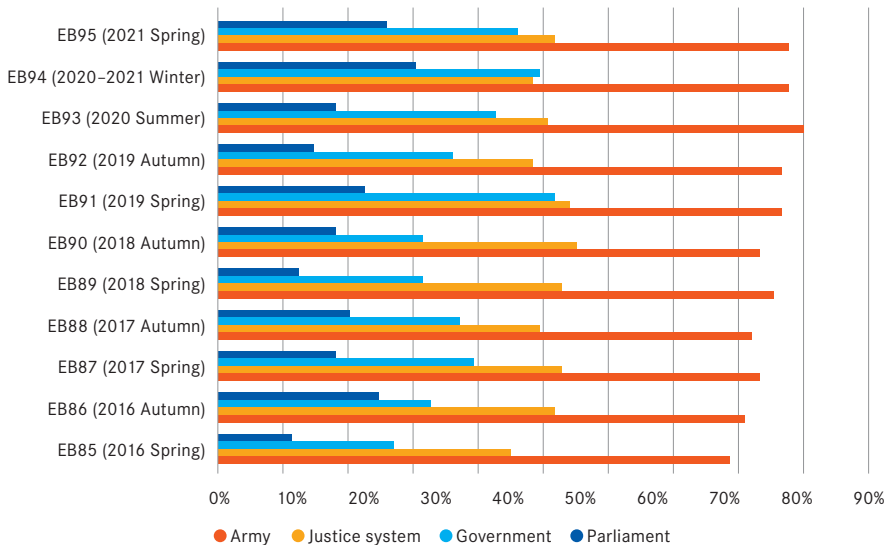
Lithuanians certainly not willing to defend Lithuania remained the same (19.4 percent), while the proportion of Russians who certainly would not contribute to the country's defence decreased from 20.1 percent to 9.4 percent. The share of Russian respondents who said they would defend Lithuania in 2019 was 26.8 percent, and in 2020 only 16.3 percent declared willingness to defend the state. However, in the 2019 survey, the demographic indicator is the language spoken in the family and only two are mentioned (Lithuanian and Russian). In the 2020 survey, the indicator is nationality and there are already three categories (Lithuanian, Russian and other). It can be assumed that the majority of respondents who declared their nationality to be 'other' are representatives of the Polish ethnic community, as this community is the most numerous in Lithuania. Thus, in 2020, as many as 63.9 percent of respondents of other nationalities could not answer whether would they defend the state, while 14.1 percent of the respondents were willing to defend Lithuania.



**Figure 2.** Proportion of population by nationality in relation to the total number of permanent residents.<sup>39</sup>

Virgilijus Rutkauskas in his 2018 publication assessed individual data from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and concluded that citizens of the Baltic states who lack trust in national governmental institutions or army demonstrate less willingness to defend one's own country.<sup>40</sup> According to the data of a representative public opinion poll in the Baltic states in 2020, 41 percent of respondents in Lithuania trust the government, and only 24 percent trust the parliament. In Latvia, 30 percent of respondents trust the government and 28 percent trust the parliament. In Estonia, on the other hand, 53 percent of respondents trust the government and 51 percent trust the parliament.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the main task should be to increase the trust in political institutions and democracy to increase the willingness of the population to defend their homeland.

It is true that when comparing public confidence in the army with trust in other institutions, such as the Lithuanian parliament, government or justice system, the army is the most trusted national institution (Figure 3). According to Eurobarometer surveys, Lithuania's public trust in the army since 2015 has ranged between 70 and 80 percent. The peak of confidence was reached in the summer of 2020, and in 2021, 78 percent of the respondents expressed their trust in the army.



**Figure 3.** Trust of Lithuania's citizens in national institutions according to Eurobarometer surveys.<sup>42</sup>

It is important to mention that, according to the results of surveys conducted by national public opinion research companies which are included in the annual reports of the Ministry of National Defence, trust in the army in September 2021 was 64 percent and almost 11 percent distrusted Lithuania's armed forces (Table 7).

Tend to trust (annual average)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
According to the national public opinion research companies	54	56	58	60	62	66*
According to Eurobarometer	71	74	75	77	79	78*

**Table 7.** Dynamics of public trust in the Lithuanian army (percent).<sup>43</sup>

\*Estimated average.

According to Lithuanian National Anti-Poverty Network, in 2020, 585 thousand people lived below the at-risk of poverty line. It means that almost 21 percent of the population received only 430 Eur income per month for one person or 904 Eur for a family with two children under 14 years old. Income inequality in Lithuania is one of the largest in the European Union. It is true that income inequality is declining. In 2015, the income level of 20 percent of the richest and 20 percent of the poorest people in Lithuania differed 7.5 times, in 2020 the difference was 6.1 times.<sup>44</sup> Comparing the Baltic states income inequality, Latvia and Lithuania rank among the highest in the EU,<sup>45</sup> however, to determine whether income inequality is a decisive factor in why the willingness to defend one's country is higher in Estonia and lower in Lithuania and Latvia, long-term comparative studies should be conducted based not only on public survey data but also on qualitative research methods.

## Conclusions

In 2015, the Ministry of National Defence of Lithuania updated the Strategy of preparing the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania for state defence. The strategy defines that an integrated system of civic preparation must have two complementary elements: the nation's determination to fight for the country's

independence and resist the aggressor in every possible way, and certain knowledge and practical skills required for both civil and armed defence. Consequently, one of the main goals of the strategy was to provide two types of knowledge to Lithuania's citizens. Firstly, military training. Secondly, knowledge and skills required to participate in civilian resistance.<sup>46</sup> The surveys discussed earlier illustrate that the experience gained in military organizations has a positive effect on the willingness to defend one's state. In general, the greater the number of organizations in which a person participates, the greater the willingness to participate in resistance in the event of war.<sup>47</sup> However, for the resistance to be universal and armed, it is necessary to nationally cultivate the military training of young people.

Five years later, the Ministry of National Defence announced a draft Strategy of preparing the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania for civil resistance, which includes an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The main identified weakness is the lack of knowledge of citizens about participation in state defence and civil resistance.<sup>48</sup> This indicates that prior strategy was not successfully implemented. Moreover, it is noticed that only 50 percent of citizens would be willing to be involved in the country's defence and civil resistance. At the same time, in public schools, optional modules dedicated to national defence are not popular among students. The main threats to civil resistance that are defined in the Draft Strategy is a lack of trust in parliament and government, low participation in public organizations and civic activities. The main task defined in the Strategy is to introduce values that would promote citizens' identification with the state and patriotism, and willingness to defend one's state.<sup>49</sup> Does this mean that Lithuanian citizens are the most unpatriotic of all the Baltic states and can this explain the lack of willingness to defend the state? In addition, it remains unclear how success will be measured. Would 60 or 70 percent of the population willing to defend Lithuania be enough?

Perhaps the explanation for why Lithuanians are the least willing of all the Baltic states to defend their state is simpler. The message about threats is not being clearly articulated, i.e., it is too abstract just to announce that Russia is posing a military threat to Lithuania. As long as people are bombarded with discourses of hybrid threats or attacks without a clear plan of action for what they could do in their personal lives to contribute to national security, it is doubtful that a mere spread of values will make



any difference. Knowing that one has a duty to contribute to a country's defence must be based on an understanding of what is threatening the country and how specifically it should be acted upon. Another explanation is that the message is not reaching the target group. For instance, in 2020, the Department of Mobilization and Civil Resistance under the Ministry of National Defence issued "The Alphabet of Civil Resistance: Tips for Combating Without Weapons." Only the Lithuanian radio and television reported on this publication. Not even one popular internet news site informed about the importance of this publication in the educational or civil society building process. The publicity of the book was not universal, i.e., no social networks, influencers or other modern means of communication were used to substantiate its importance for the public. Consequently, one may argue that Lithuania's citizens live in a false sense of existential security.

Distrust of state institutions and media, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, further encourages the population to question all messages that the government is trying to send. In this case, a reliable intermediary must be used for successful communication. The Lithuanian Riflemen's Union or the National Defence Volunteer Forces could play a greater role not only in informing the population, but also in promoting a sense of duty build on the motto "the one is not worthy of freedom, who does not protect it".

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Please see chapter of this publication "Willingness to Defend the Baltic States in Quantitative Terms" by Māris Andžāns.

<sup>2</sup> Please see chapters of this publication "Willingness to Defend the Baltic States in Quantitative Terms" by Māris Andžāns and "Willingness to defend Estonia: Fostered by Civil-Military Integration and Communication" by Ivo Juurvee.

<sup>3</sup> Pilietinės visuomenės institutas, *Pilietinės galios indeksas [Civic Empowerment Index] 2014, 2015*, <http://www.civitas.lt/research/pilietines-galios-indeksas/>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Diana Janušauskienė, Eglė Vileikienė, Laima Nevinskaitė, and Ingrida Gečienė – Janulionė, *Ar Lietuvos gyventojai jaučiasi saugūs?: subjektyvus saugumas kintančiame geopolitiniame kontekste*. [Do Lithuanians feel safe?: subjective security in a changing geopolitical context.] (Vilnius: Lietuvos socialinių tyrimų centras, 2017), [https://www.lstc.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Ar\\_gyventojai\\_jauciasi\\_saugus.pdf](https://www.lstc.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Ar_gyventojai_jauciasi_saugus.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Linas Kojala (ed.) *Research on The Assessment of The Geopolitical Situation and Perception Of Threats: Based On Representative Research On The Lithuanian Public Opinion*. (Vilnius: Eastern Europe Studies Centre, 2020), 23, [https://www.eesc.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/v02-web\\_Research-of-Perception-of-Threats\\_paper\\_A4.pdf](https://www.eesc.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/v02-web_Research-of-Perception-of-Threats_paper_A4.pdf).

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